



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM GOD BRINGS BEAUTY FROM TRIALS

By Erin Burkhardt

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged,
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

(Joshua 1:9)

Imagine you're back in the emergency room for the tenth time this year. The fluorescent lights make your eyes squint and the familiar disinfectant makes your nose burn. You sigh as you put on the dressing gown and don your ID band. You think to yourself, "Why does this keep happening?" Regardless of the cause, you are here again, battling your chronic illness.

Chronic illness can feel like you're in a never-ending cycle of medical crises, going from one emergency to the next. It's painful and discouraging, leaving you to question God's place in all of it. It makes us wonder why He allows such things to happen and what good can possibly come from such pain. In Scripture, God reminds us that not only is He with us in the messy bits, but He is also using them for our good and His glory. Chronic illness is painful, but pain can be turned into unexpected beauty.

God is in our struggle. He sees how discouraged we get when we end up back in a place of distress. He feels our defeat when the strides we have taken slip away and we are once more in a physical crisis. He sees us, He feels our hurt, and not only does He care, but He's doing something great in the face of it all.

Before David became king, he faced many trials, including being hunted down by the current king, Saul (1 Samuel 18–30). Although David took the high road against Saul's hateful pursuits, he always ended up in a place of distress and desperation. This cycle took a great mental and physical toll on David, leading him to question what God was really doing behind the scenes.

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Using the gift God had given him long before he was on the run from Saul and living in caves, David took all that grief and pain and poured it into poems and songs. These works of art are now documented in the book of Psalms in the Bible. To this day, his words of lament, questioning, and even heartache resonate with people all over the world. God was with David in every trial and was using every cycle of defeat to shape a glorious future for him and the future of mankind!

Chronic illness is a battle that can make us feel like we are going around in circles, and those circles are exhausting. Like David we don't always see the "what" and "why" behind our circumstances, but God IS using your unique trials to bring something beautiful into your future.

Remember Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Whenever you feel defeated and alone, remember that God has not left you or abandoned you to an unknown fate. He grieves and mourns alongside you in comfort and love, but He is also using your pain for incredible good. Today may be a painful day, but unseen, God is using it for an amazing future just like he did for King David.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Like David, what cycles are you in that are leaving you feeling defeated, discouraged, or doubting?
- How does your illness/wellness journey make you feel? Remember all feelings are good before God!
- What are some ways you can express all the emotions you're feeling about your cycle of illness? Can you pour it out while you sing, ride a bike, or play an instrument?
- Do you believe God can take all the hurt and pain and make something beautiful?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for being the author and perfecter of our faith. Thank you that you are trustworthy. Please help us to pour out our hearts to you using the gifts you've blessed us with. You give us such comfort in your Word, reminding us of your faithfulness and sovereignty, taking our brokenness and making it beautiful. Thank you for being the rock we can build our hope on even from the halls of a hospital. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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